

ROME'S SECRET ORDERS

R. A. Williams Describes Them in His Book "Mexico and Its Religion,"

Which Was Published by Harper & Brothers of New York in 1855—
Rome's Work Contrasted With That of the Quakers.

[In 1855, Harper & Brothers, New York, published a book by R. A. Williams, entitled "Mexico and Its Religion," from which we extract the following chapter:]

The monkish orders of Mexico have remained unchanged from the time of their first establishment. We have seen that they have fallen off immensely in numbers, but have increased immensely in efficiency, by the termination of those internal controversies between the Spanish-born and Creoles, and by enfranchisement from state control. Not only are they now all native-born, but the Meztizos seem to be the predominant race in the priesthood. The priesthood is not now so inviting an employment as it was before the suppression of the Inquisition. Miracles have ceased to be a profitable speculation, while the revenue once paid to the monks has been followed by ill-suppressed contempt. The employment once monopolized by the Spaniards being now thrown open to general competition, there is less willingness to submit to the despotism which ever reigns in religious houses than there was in the time of the vice-kings. Hard fare, cruel treatment and public contempt, have diminished the candidates for monastic orders, until the old proverb, "He that cannot do better, let him turn monk," is not unknown in Mexico. With the increase of liberty, the number of nuns has diminished, as violence can no longer be used in getting a girl into a convent. For all these reasons the number of the religious has rapidly diminished, while the wealth and efficiency of the church has increased.

Having spoken of the bishops, the lords spiritual of Mexico, and the controlling influence they exercise over a feeble government, we come next to the second class of spiritual masters of the country—the heads of orders, the provincials and the heads of religious houses. These two classes of dignitaries are usually elected for their known severity of discipline, either by the procurement of the bishop, or through fanaticism of the monks or nuns, who, having voluntarily made themselves convicts and prisoners for life, now undertake to add to their self-afflicted mortification by choosing for their head a superior the most hateful of their number. The novice is taught that the greatest favor with Heaven is to be obtained by implicit obedience under most trying circumstances, and the more cruel the despotism they un-murmuringly submit to, the greater will be the accumulation of good works. But cursed to the lowest depths of purgatory is that recluse who dares to murmur even in his inmost thoughts; and if he so far forgets his duty as to murmur aloud, then all the powers of the church are brought to crush his insubordination.

We have thus followed spiritual despotism through its various stages, from the pope to the bishops, from the bishops to the provincials of religious orders, and then down to the superiors of a community of half a dozen monks or nuns, by whom immorality is pardonable, but who regard disobedience or insubordination in the slightest particular "like the sin of witchcraft and idolatry." Such is the perfect organization of the papacy in all its parts, which, acting as one great secret, political, social and religious association, labors continually to concentrate the riches of the nations at Rome as a common centre.

There is a peculiar feature in the Catholic church in Mexico unknown to other Catholic countries; it is the preponderance of the regular clergy (monks) over the secular clergy. This is owing to Cortez, who wrote to Emperor Charles V. to send him regulars, for the conversion of the Indians, instead of seculars, assigning as a reason for this request "that the latter display extravagant luxury, leave great wealth to their natural children and give great scandal to the newly-converted Indians." Hence more than one-half of the Mexican clergy are monks, and wear the cowl; for at the time of the census of 1793, as we have seen, there were in the city of Mexico 1646 monks, besides lay-brothers, against 550 secular priests, while in the fifteen convents for nuns there were 923 of these female monks.

The reader has already become quite

BRYAN'S PLATFORM.

LINCOLN, NEB., NOV. 1, 1894.

DEAR SIR:—I am a candidate for the United States Senate. You will find on the back of this letter the platform upon which I stand, and you already know of the position taken by me in Congress upon public questions. If you desire my election, put an "X" after my name on the ballot and then vote for members of the legislature who favor my election. Until we can secure the election of Senators by a direct vote of the people, you can only secure your choice for Senator by sending men to the legislature who will vote as you desire.

Yours truly, W. J. BRYAN.

Printed on the back of this letter was the Democratic platform, which contained this plank:

We believe in the right of every individual to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and we condemn as un-American and contrary to the spirit of our institutions, any attempt to apply a religious test to the citizen or to the official. We appeal to all Democrats who have been led into political hostility to the members of any church to remember the principles of religious liberty promulgated by Thomas Jefferson, and defended by the party which he organized.

C. J. Smyth, the Romanist and attorney for the Jesuits, was on the committee that drafted that platform on which Mr. Bryan said he would stand. Smyth also read it to the convention, and the rest of the red-necked Irish who were in the convention yelled themselves hoarse in approval of the "anti-A. P. A. plank." Mr. Bryan's paper intersperses its report of a reading of that part of the platform with "cheers," "applause," and "cheers" at the end.

C. J. Smyth, according to Mr. Bryan's own paper, then introduced the following resolution: "We fully indorse the course of Hon. W. J. Bryan in Congress."

familiar with the Franciscan fathers and their vows of poverty and self-mortification, and their skill at playing for gold ounces. They have pretty well maintained that reputation since the time of Friar Thomas Gage. But there are some honorable exceptions to this rule, though few and far between. We have already noticed how they were favored by Cortez, and the result has been that they are the richest fraternity in the republic. These holy men of the Angelle Order of St. Francis have lately discovered a new source of wealth in renting their large central court to a Frenchman, who occupies it with the best garden of plants in Mexico; and as the convent occupies nearly a whole square in the central part of the city, they have pierced the convent walls and rented out shops upon the business streets, while the soldiers of Santa Anna occupy the vacant cloisters of the convent. In this "happy family," with all the immense wealth of the establishment, the *donados*, and those monks who are so poor as to have no friends, find but a miserable subsistence.

Of the Dominicans I have already spoken in connection with the Inquisition. In their yard is the flag-stone which was used by them in offering human sacrifice before the revolution. There it is kept as a relic and symbol of the power once enjoyed by the church. There is yet a lingering hope that there may be restored to these brethren the power of roasting alive human beings. In speaking of depravity of morals, it is hard to say which of the fraternities has reached the lowest level, though common consent concedes the palm to the Dominicans.

The name of the Carmelites carries us back to the time of the Crusades, but they are better known in Mexico as the proprietors of the *Desierto*, which Thomas Gage so touchingly describes. Their habitual practice of self-denial and mortification, in appearance, while rioting on the luxuries that devotees lavished upon them, has not been forgotten. These holy brothers had a hand in the Inquisition as well as the Dominicans. They were a set of scamps set to watch the purity of other men's lives, while they themselves lived a life of habitual profligacy. The ruins of their old convent, the *Desierto*, is

still one of the most attractive spots about the city. As the traveler wanders among its ruined walls, he will find in the subterranean cells ring bolts fastened in the walls, where poor prisoners for their faith endured something more than self-mortification.

The monks of Santiago, San Augustin and the Capuchins, have all fine convents, and are rich; but the monks of Saint James are the most inveterate beggars.

The monks of San Fernando enjoy an enviable reputation compared with the spotted sheep I have just been considering. They are late comers, and have not learned all the ways of wickedness of the older orders. Next come the "Brethren of the Profession," of whom it is pleasant to speak, after saying so many hard things of their neighbors. They stand so high as men of character and learning, that I am tempted to tell their story on hearsay, for want of better authority. They were once Jesuits, but when the royal *cebulas* of Carlos III. came for their expulsion, these fathers had sustained so good a character for charity and usefulness that they were allowed to return, on condition of renouncing the name and peculiarities of that order. I am inclined to believe this strange story to be substantially true, for clearly they are of the Jesuits, and yet they are not Jesuits. The reputation which they enjoyed in 1767 they still retain, and not only command the respect of all classes of society in Mexico, but their chapel is the fashionable church of the city, where genteel people resort to say their prayers.

"The Brethren of the Holy Places of Jerusalem"—the Hieronimite monks, are not numerous, and are known in the market as lenders of money, with the interest of which they support themselves and "the poor saints of Jerusalem;" that is, a portion of those lazy, greasy, fighting Latin monks at Jerusalem, that have been one of the causes of the present war in Europe.

"The Hospitalers of Saint John" (*Fuancos*) are better known for their exploits in the time of the Crusades than for anything they have done in Mexico. It would be a thrice-told tale to repeat the story of the Jesuits; the world knows that too well already. The details of their proceedings in Mexico till the time of their expulsion have

been too often written by their enemies. Their great prosperity and their great wealth made them the envy of the other orders, as corrupt and depraved as themselves, but not so dangerous, because they had reached that point at which depravity ceases to contaminate. Dirty, greasy monks could not endure an order that wore the garb of gentlemen, and were in favor with the aristocracy, while they themselves were despised. This envy was all powerful with them, and led, for a time, to the laying aside of their own private bickerings, and uniting in the crusade against the common enemy, the Jesuits, and acting in harmony with the political power.

The church has always made much of the nuns. It has ever been the custom of the priesthood to endeavor to throw a veil of romance over the very unromantic way of life followed by females who have shut themselves up for life in a place hardly equal to a second-class state prison. Woman has an important place which God has assigned her in the world; but when she separates herself from the family circle and elbows her way to the rostrum where, with a semi-masculine attire and with a voice not intended for oratory, she harangues a tittering crowd upon the rights of women to perform the duties of men, or goes to the opposite extreme and shuts herself up within high stone walls to avoid the society of the other sex, she equally sins against her own nature, and not only brings misery upon herself, but inflicts upon society the evils of a pernicious example, and furnishes a theme for all kinds of scandal.

Proud families who have portionless daughters; relatives who desire to get rid of heirs to coveted estates; convents in want of funds or endowments, or a pretty victim for the public entertainment on taking the veil; friends who have unmarried women on their hands, and romantic young misses, ambitious of playing the queen for a day at the cost of being a prisoner for life, have all contributed to populate the fifteen nunneries of the city of Mexico. In the flourishing times of the Inquisition, this business of inveighing choice victims into convents was more profitable, for then murmurings could be crushed into silence, and parents

dreaded to oppose the wretched pimps of superstition who came to inveigle their daughters into convents.

The Quaker prison of Philadelphia is a paradise compared with such a place as this. If the reader has ever placed his eye at the keeper's eye-hole in that prison, he must have seen in many a cell a cheerful face, and the appearance of as much comfort as is compatible with an imprisoned condition; for ministering angels have been there—mothers in Israel, who have torn themselves from their domestic duties for a little to minister consolation to the very criminals in prisons; and now that the prison door has separated the poor wretch forever from society, whose laws have been outraged, she, by her kindness and teaching, has led the convict to look to Heaven with a hope of forgiveness, and daily to pray for those he has injured, while he reads in the Holy Book which she gave him, that a repenting thief accompanied the Son of God to Paradise.

Let us turn from such an unpoetical scene as this, which that cheerful prison presents, to the convent of Santa Teresa, the most celebrated of all the ten or fifteen nunneries now in operation about the city of Mexico. In a cold, damp, comfortless cell, kneeling upon the pavement, we may see a delicate woman mechanically repeating her daily imposed penance of Latin prayers, before the image of a favorite saint and a basin of holy water. This self-regulating, automaton praying machine, as she counts off the number of allotted prayers by the number of beads upon her rosary, beats into her bosom the sharp edge of an iron cross that rests within her shirt of sackcloth, until, nature and her task exhausted, she throws herself down upon a wooden bed, so ingeniously arranged as to make sleep impossible. This poor victim of self-inflicted daily torture, half crazed from insufficient food, and sleep, and clothing, has endured all this misery to accumulate a stock of good works for the use of less meritorious sinners, besides the amount necessary to carry herself to Heaven; for penance, and not repentance, is this poor pagan's passport for salvation.

The old Quakeress is not a fashionable saint, for she never dreamed of this

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THE POPE IS VEXED

At Ireland for Approving of the Republican Party.

Leo Sending Special Instructions to Martinelli for His Political Guidance.

Although the church is not in politics, according to the claims of the leaders and prominent priests, the following telegrams announce that the pope is vexed because one of his archbishops has expressed views not in accord and harmony with the majority, and his dispatching to this country special instructions for the guidance of the Catholic clergy, and naturally, by inference, to be dictated to the lay members in the present political campaign. The following is the text of the telegrams as they appeared in the New York daily papers:

ROME, Oct. 19.—The pope has privately expressed his disapproval of the action of Archbishop Ireland in a letter which he is sending to Cardinal Gibbons.

As is usual with the Vatican, there is no official pronouncement in the matter, but the views of his holiness will reach the ears of the person for whom they are intended.

It is learned at the Vatican that the pope is sending special instructions to Archbishop Martinelli, the newly appointed apostolic delegate to the United States, in regard to the attitude of the Catholic clergy of America in the present political campaign.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19.—"No special instructions have been received from the pope or Archbishop Martinelli regarding the attitude of the clergy in the present campaign," said Dr. Rooker, the delegate's secretary, today. "The report is based upon an article in the London *News* last week. I do not say that such instructions have not been prepared, and they may be on the way here now in the mails. If so, they would probably reach the legation about the last of this month, too late to have any effect in this campaign. I do think that Rome is particularly bothered about the attitude of the clergy in this respect. If it had been, instructions would have been sent earlier. I do not see that the clergy are taking any particularly active interest in political matters. Archbishop Ireland has expressed his views, but only as a private citizen of Minnesota, and not in any official capacity. They are simply worth as much as the opinions of any other man, who knows as much about the subject, no more and no less. I do not say that the pope believes as I do about the clergy taking part in American politics, for his views have not been received here up to date.

Could Not be Conquered.

It will be remembered that up to date every detachment of troops leaving Spain to fight the Cubans has been "blessed" by the papal hierarchy—even Weyler's body-guard receiving that very doubtful benefit. As in all historic cases, the blessing has proved to be a curse.

Says a dispatch to the New York Herald:

MADRID, September 3.—An open-air mass was celebrated on the promenade at San Sebastian today, in the presence of the soldiers about to depart for Cuba and the Philippine Islands to reinforce the Spanish troops there. The mass was attended by the royal family, the king wearing the uniform of a cadet of the infantry school.

The Bishop of Victoria preached to the troops, to whom he said that the Spanish flag, surmounted by the cross, could not be conquered. Speaking on behalf of the king, the bishop expressed his majesty's regret that he was unable to lead his gallant soldiers to victory. Later the papal benediction was bestowed upon the soldiers, who knelt to receive the blessing of his holiness.

Premier Canovas, in the course of an interview had with him today, declared that the troubles in the Philippine Islands and Porto Rico were the results of the efforts of Cuban filibustering agents to harass the Spanish government. Spain, the premier said, would deal inexorably with the conspirators should disturbances occur in Porto Rico.

Sickness Among Children

is prevalent at all seasons of the year, but can be avoided largely when they are properly cared for. *Infant Health* is the title of a valuable pamphlet accessible to all who will send address to the N. Y. Condensed Milk Co., N. Y. City)